



Ypsi Mix

312 N River Street, Ypsilanti MI

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Shop Your Co-op this holiday season

—By Lisa Bashert

As you consider how to spend your hard-earned cash this holiday season, think about Your Co-op! We stock many locally-made



gift items from farms, crafters, and organizations that we love, and you will, too.

Starting in Ypsilanti with our creative neighbors, consider jewelry from Lar-

raine U'ren. You'll find many choices of earrings and necklaces. Union Street Soapworks is another locally-made, high-quality product. Long lasting and smells great! Try the cleverly-name "Dirt" soap.

Want to give something savory to sip by the fire? Ugly Mug artisan coffee is roasted in Ypsi and comes in pound bags for your giving pleasure. Local honey from Alden's Apiary would make a sweet addition to your gift. Alden's manages their hives organically right here in Ypsilanti.

Need a stocking stuffer? How 'bout a cozy pair of wool socks, a scarf, a stuffed animal, or pair of tights from Maggie's Organics, here in Ypsi? Maggie's clothing and toys are Fair Trade grown, sewn & manufactured, from seed to finished product.

If someone you love takes a lunch to work, consider giving them the gift of trash-free, reusable lunch ware from The Eventual Farmer: snack packs, sandwich wraps made from reused materials, all made in Ypsilanti.

Don't miss the lovely 2013 Calendars from Ypsi's own Growing Hope Center. The dates of many annual Ypsi events & festivals are already noted, as well as suggestions for what to plant, to harvest, and to look for outdoors for every month of the year.

We have lots more choices from all across Michigan! Poppy Candle Company (Lawrence, MI, near Kalamazoo) makes sumptuous beeswax candles in

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December Holiday Cheer Alert!

Keep warm with a variety of Michigan craft beers and wines this month:

New Belgium is available in 6- and 12-packs, with three new styles: **Snow Day** winter ale, **1554** black ale, and Belgian-style **Ab-bey Ale** (plus **Fat Tire** remains available).

Bell's **Christmas Ale** is another delicious seasonal

delight from Kalamazoo's premier craft brewery.

We will be carrying **Sweet Nancy** sparkling wine from St. Julian's in Paw Paw. B Nektar Meadery offers several festive meads and Sandhill Crane Winery offers fruit wines and tasty port specialties for your pleasure.

Sweet Nancy & Cooke's champagne will be on sale in December! Happy Holidays!



The Other Certifications: CNG & GAP

—by Jen Whaley

Last month we compared USDA Certified Organic products with non-certified local products. Since then, I had the opportunity to attend the annual conference of the Michigan Organic Food and Farm Alliance (MOFFA) in Flint, where the controversial topic of certifications was widely discussed. While it was clear that

everyone present supported organic practices, it was difficult to agree on a clear definition of organic, or which considerations (environmental, safety, nutritional, sanitation, etc.) were of most significance. Witnessing this divergence of opinion among organic growers, one can easily appreciate the pressing need to develop alternative systems for regulating quality.

Back in August, the Mix profiled Snick's Farm (Jonesville, MI), one of our suppliers who is a Certified Naturally Grown (CNG) grower. You may recall that the

CNG program is a grassroots, peer-reviewed certification program geared toward small farmers (currently 37 in Michigan) who farm organically, but who have chosen not to pursue USDA Organic Certification. According to their website (naturallygrown.org), their growers use the same standards as the USDA's National Organic Program (NOP), and the program has been around just as long, since 2002. Since the program is peer-reviewed (versus paying an independent agency), some question the training, qualifications, and stringency of the auditors, but many find it provides a good alternative to the often high-cost, sometimes bureaucratic USDA certification.

Another acronym we've heard about recently is the Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) program. A direct response by the USDA to outbreaks of food-borne illness from fresh produce, this certification focuses on safe product handling after

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The Other Certifications, cont'd

harvest. GAP certification requires written documentation of a food safety program, including standard operating procedures and logs of numerous farm chores, such as worker training, bathroom cleaning, and container cleaning. Although GAP certification is technically still voluntary, nearly everyone in the produce industry agrees that mandatory certification is on the horizon for those who sell wholesale.

Local farmer Jon Goetz of Goetz Farm (Riga, MI) agrees. He recently became GAP certified after discovering that many local universities and hospitals require it of all of their suppliers. Currently the Co-op does not require its growers to be GAP certified; whether growers who sell at farmers markets and CSAs will be forced to comply with certification remains to be seen.

At one of the MOFFA roundtable discussions, one grower reminded us that, for all of these programs, it is not the product that is being certified, but the process. Nothing the consumer buys is 100% guaranteed. This is important to remember when choosing the best certification label for you.

Saturday Dec 1— Sunday Dec 9, 2012

Buy Local Week — Everywhere!

Think Local First is promoting this annual celebration of locally-owned businesses throughout Washtenaw County. Consider using cash when making holiday purchases at local businesses. It will help ensure you'll stick to your budget and can save local businesses thousands of dollars in processing fees. That means even more of your money will stay local. Find the event on Facebook and take the pledge!

Saturday Dec 8, 11 - 7 & Sunday Dec 9 12 - 6

DIYpsi Indie Art Fair, Corner Brewer, 720 Norris, Ypsi

36 local artists will be selling the best in handmade items, including Pillbug, Glass Action, bettula, Woolly Mammoth, Oh Sew Betty, Nikoye, and many more.

Friday Dec 14, Potluck 6:00pm, Film 7:00pm

Film: "Bag It" at downtown Ypsi Library, 229 W Michigan Ave, Ypsi

Immediately follows the 6pm Growing Hope Community Potluck—bring a dish to pass! The Sustainability Film Series is co-sponsored by YFC, the Ypsi District Library, Growing Hope, and Transition Town Ypsi. "Bag It" is a humorous documentary about plastics in our society. Bag It addresses the health problems from constant contact with plastics and their impact on the environment. The doc follows a family as it tries to avoid plastics in everyday life and how you start noticing its ubiquity. Just in time for the holiday gift-giving season!

Consider Co-op Membership

New Member Promotion

Join YFC for 2013 in December and get a free extra month! Your \$20 annual fee or full fair share payment will be applied immediately — so don't wait for January, join now!

December Events

A Peek at Produce: Cranberries

—by Jen Whaley, Produce Manager

Why focus on cranberries when Thanksgiving is over? Hopefully to heighten appreciation of this dynamic native fruit, and to avoid seeing it relegated to a single meal.

While Wisconsin and Massachusetts are tops in US cranberry production, about 250 acres are grown in Michigan, from the Indiana border all the way up to Whitefish Point. This year, Michigan cranberries suffered — as many crops did — from our sum-

mer drought, but the Co-op has been fortunate to source pesticide-free cranberries from Dry Bucket Farms in Grass Lake (also one of our egg suppliers).

Most of us already know that cranberries are nutritional powerhouses, loaded with antioxidants. The best way to preserve these nutrients is to eat them raw, per-

haps in an Asian chopped salad, creamy chicken salad, or on fresh greens with a sweet dressing, goat cheese, and walnuts. Or try them cooked, in baking (see recipe p 4), in stuffed acorn squash, or as a tangy sauce for pork or poultry. Don't forget cranberries freeze well, so pick some up to enjoy all winter long!





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many shapes and styles. Curvy Girl Soap (also from Lawrence) has lots of soap options, charmingly wrapped and in convenient sizes for stuffing in a friend's stocking or tucking beside the Chanukiah. Or try Jen's Sanatio Skin Care lip gloss (Gaylord, MI), new for this holiday season.

If you have a flair for the culinary, why not create a complete meal-in-a-basket, with Mama Mucci ravioli/tortellini/pasta & sauce (Canton, MI) — or Al Dente pasta and sauce (Whitmore Lake) — and a fresh tasty baguette from the YFC's own River Street Bakery? You could whip up a breakfast basket with a muffin mix from Westwind Milling (Linden, MI, near Flint) and Mindo Cocoa (Dexter, MI) or Roos Roast organic, Fair Trade coffee (roasted in Ann Arbor, MI). We also carry Polish Fire Hot Sauce (Keweenaw, MI) and Clancy's Fancy (Ann Arbor) to warm you up!

Fresh, supple local greenery, in the form of Christmas trees and door wreaths, is provided by Goetz Farms (Riga, MI, near Monroe).

YFC even has some great local books: *The Woodcutter and the Most Beautiful Tree* is a gorgeously illustrated children's book by local author Robb N. Johnson; or for older readers, *Freshman's Guide to Surviving College* by Ypsi author John Delcamp.

Can't choose? Co-op Gift Cards can save the day! (Available at the cash register.) And, if you're entertaining over the holidays, we have Deli-made dips & cheese balls; Bakery pies, sweets and seasonal breads; and much, much more to make the season bright.

Cranberry Pistachio Biscotti Recipe

INGREDIENTS:

1/4 cup light olive oil
3/4 cup white sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon almond extract
2 eggs
1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 cup dried cranberries
1 1/2 cups pistachio nuts

DIRECTIONS:

Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F (150 degrees C).

In a large bowl, mix together oil

and sugar until well blended.

Mix in the vanilla and almond extracts, then beat in the eggs. Combine flour, salt, and baking powder; gradually stir into egg mixture. Mix in cranberries and



nuts by hand.

Divide dough in half. Form two logs (12x2 inches) on a cookie sheet that has been lined with parchment paper. Dough may be sticky; wet hands with cool water to handle dough more easily.

Bake for 35 minutes in the preheated oven, or until logs are light brown. Remove from oven, and set aside to cool for 10 minutes. Reduce oven heat to 275 degrees F (135 degrees C).

Cut logs on diagonal into 3/4 inch thick slices.

Cranberry Pistachio Biscotti